

The Distributor's Guide to Selling Value Instead of Just Price

Price will always matter in healthcare distribution. But when price becomes the entire sales strategy, distributors risk becoming interchangeable.

There will almost always be another supplier willing to offer a lower price. The better strategy is to show customers the **value behind the purchase**—including product availability, service, convenience, expertise, and purchasing efficiency.

Move Beyond the Unit Price

A customer asking for a lower price may actually be looking for something else: predictable costs, reliable supply, fewer vendors, or a simpler ordering process.

Sales representatives can uncover those needs by asking:

- Are you experiencing backorders or substitutions?
- How many suppliers are you currently using?
- Are you purchasing similar products from multiple vendors?
- Are you taking advantage of available contract pricing?
- Which product categories create the most purchasing challenges?

These questions shift the conversation from **"Can you beat this price?"** to **"How can we improve your overall purchasing?"**

Sell the Solution, Not Just the SKU

Healthcare distributors have an opportunity to become more than product suppliers.

Instead of selling individual items, look at the customer's broader needs. A physician practice may need everything from gloves and syringes to wound care, diagnostics, disinfectants, and exam room equipment.

A dental practice may need PPE, sterilization products, restorative materials, anesthetic supplies, and everyday operatory disposables.

Understanding the customer's operation allows the distributor to recommend products, simplify purchasing, and identify opportunities to consolidate spending.

Use GPO Contracts as a Value Tool

For distributors participating in a GPO, negotiated manufacturer agreements and contract pricing can strengthen the value proposition.

But the conversation shouldn't simply be, **"We have a better price."**

Instead, distributors can use GPO resources to help customers evaluate:

- Contract pricing
- Product alternatives
- Standardization opportunities
- Supply availability
- High-volume categories
- Purchasing across multiple suppliers

Depending on the program, GPO participation may also provide access to rebate or administrative-fee opportunities and broader manufacturer relationships.

Show Customers the Bigger Picture

Value can come from more than product cost.

Distributors can differentiate themselves through:

Product expertise — helping customers select the right products.

Supply reliability — helping customers plan for critical categories and alternatives.

Convenience — consolidating orders and simplifying purchasing.

Data — identifying spending patterns, contract opportunities, and product standardization opportunities.

Service — providing responsive support when problems arise.

When these elements are combined with competitive pricing, the distributor becomes much harder to replace.

Value Selling Can Grow the Account

A price-focused conversation about gloves may stay a conversation about gloves.

A value-focused conversation can uncover opportunities across PPE, diagnostics, wound care, infection prevention, dental supplies, DME, capital equipment, and other categories.

That creates opportunities to increase **share of wallet** while becoming a more strategic supplier to the customer.

The Bottom Line

Distributors don't need to stop competing on price. They need to stop making price the **only** reason customers buy from them.

Competitive pricing gets attention. Product expertise, reliable supply, convenience, service, and purchasing support create a stronger customer relationship.

For distributors, the goal is simple:

Don't just sell the lowest price. Show customers why buying from you delivers more value.